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TS-142631 ✓

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence 21 November 1955

SUBJECT : Project AQUATONE - Summary

1. The project was approved on 1 December 1954. Work was started on the airframe, engines, cameras [redacted] within a matter of weeks on the basis of oral understandings; contracts followed. 25X1D

2. The development and production of specialized equipment is in progress in nine different fields as follows:

High altitude long-range aircraft -- Lockheed Aircraft Company

An improved model of the J-57 Jet Engine -- Pratt & Whitney

Optics and cameras -- Perkin-Elmer Company and Hycon
Manufacturing Company

[redacted] 25X1D

Modified high altitude aircraft fuel -- Shell Oil Company (through
General Doolittle)

Specialized film and processing techniques -- Eastman Kodak Co.

[redacted] 25X1D

Electronic and celestial navigational systems -- Ramo-Wooldridge Co.
and Baird Associates

New high altitude pressure suit and other personal equipment -- The
Air Research and Development Command

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3. Chronology:

- a. Construction of test site authorized in late May; in use by mid-July.
- b. First aircraft flown 5 August; fourth delivered to the test base 21 November 1955.
- c. First camera configuration flown end of September; second test flown beginning early in November; third due in December.

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- a. Fuel control to ensure reliable engine operation at altitude.
- b. Maintenance of air pressure in equipment bay sufficient for reliable camera operation.
- c. Navigational systems and techniques.

All three believed to be on their way to solution.

5. Status: Agreement with the Air Force on organization and lines of command concluded on 2 August 1955 provides for joint task force, predominantly civilian, technically within CIA but subject to direct control by Quarles and Twining on one side; DCI and General Cabell on the other. Basic concept is that contemplated activities will be conducted as clandestine intelligence gathering operations undertaken by the clandestine service with no direct participation by the offensive air arm or other regular military units. SAC is providing training and support. The weapons system will be tested against the Air Defense Command, with its cooperation before deployment overseas.

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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Project Director

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2-RMB
3-RMB Chrono
4-Proj Sack
5-Chrono
6-Reading*

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